

BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WORKSHOP
MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2007

The monthly workshop of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held in the Library of Kickemuit Middle School, 525 Child Street, Warren, RI, on Monday, March 12, 2007. The Chairperson, William A. Estrella, Jr, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 PM.

Present: William A. Estrella, Jr., Marjorie J. McBride, William M. O'Dell, Paul Silva, Paul E. Brule, Diana B. Campbell, David L. Dugan, Joyce M. Kinsella and John P. Saviano; and Edward P. Mara, Superintendent; Melinda L. Thies, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction; Mary Cerullo, Executive Director of Literacy, K-12, Elementary Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Jane F. Correia, Director of Administration and Finance; and Andrew D. Henneous, District Solicitor

Absent: None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Marie L. Knapman, a Byfield parent, spoke to the Committee about the need to keep a principal at Byfield School. Parent participation has increased, student test scores have increased, parents feel welcome and comfortable at the school, and programs focusing on student achievement have been initiated—all due in part to Dr. Armstrong. She feels that a principal is very important to an elementary school, acting as a sounding board for teachers and a role model for students. The Byfield parents are supporting the District's budget request; however, if funding is cut, they hope that reductions can be made without taking their principal. Mr. Estrella responded that the School Committee listens and the clerk records a brief summary, but if people wish to submit a written comment, they should do so well in advance of the meeting.

PRESENTATIONS / DISCUSSIONS

Student-Designed Webpages

Ms. Diana Campbell introduced Anne Ricci, Business Department Head, and three Mt. Hope High School students who created websites for presentation at a Business Partnership Breakfast. The task was to create a website for a non-profit organization.

Kris Wetterland designed a webpage for the Warren Police Department, who does not have one. The home page is an information page with banners and with links and graphics using

Flash; the “About” page includes pictures and the mission and value statements; another page has 2005 crime statistics from the RI Police website; a “Contact Us” page has all the contact information for the Department.

Johnathan Farnsworth presented the webpage he designed for the Bristol Fire Department, Engine 3, located on Hope Street. He included a link to the annual muster competition with photos of the 2005 water battle, tug of war and relay race and the trophy case in the Defiance Station. There is a page of pictures of the fire engines with siren sound effects. Johnathan secured a list of officers and displayed their picture; he also included a brief history of the fire department with old pictures of the fire house, crew members and truck. An audio clip of “Burn, Baby, Burn” plays throughout. Johnathan also prepared a very inspiring “appreciation page” with the fireman’s prayer and a video with Amazing Grace being played on bagpipes. The presentation ended with a quote from Kurt Vonnegut. Two other students helped create this webpage.

Matt Leary’s webpage, created with the help of Amanda Coyne and Chris Azar, is for Locks of Love. The home page was designed using Front Page; Chris Azar designed buttons using Flash. There is a movie of pictures taken from the Locks of Love website with pictures of donors and recipients. The “About Us” page includes information about the organization and quick facts; the “How to Receive” page and the “How to Donate” page give broad guidelines and the

application forms. The “Forms” page links to documents on the national website. Also included are stories of real life accounts of personal experiences.

Ms. Campbell said the Technology Committee has been revived; she is a member and is open to input from the Committee and the community. Brian Latessa, Mt. Hope Business Teacher, said approximately 50 students participate in this class each year; the class has been offered for three years. Mr. Estrella said this is another one of those classes that enhances and puts students in touch with the community. He thanked the students and teachers for taking the time to come to the meeting and for their excellent presentation.

Kickemuit Middle School – School Improvement Issues

Mr. Michael Carbone, Principal, along with several staff members, gave a Powerpoint presentation on “just some of the factors that help make KMS a high performing school.” Mrs. Cynthia Sadler, Assistant Principal, reported on testing—they are conducting item analysis which will help focus on those areas in which they can make the most substantial gains; 55% of the students who were at Level 2 were within two questions of achieving the standard; a revision of their Mission Statement and Learner Expectations is expected to be completed in September; Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements drive all efforts to prepare the students for high school.

Use of the Reading 180 Intervention Program has helped improve

reading scores. Some of the initiatives implemented are Model Classroom, the Comprehensive School Reform Grant, Reading and Math Coaches and an extensive Summer Reading Program involving local libraries.

Mr. Jeffrey Howlett, Dean of Discipline, assured the public that Kickemuit is a very safe school. Former problems with student fighting are virtually non-existent. The buzzer system needs repair and he suggested a hall monitoring camera. Regarding internet safety, he said the State Police did a presentation to the students about predators and Mr. Howlett visits My Space regularly; James Hagan said there are firewalls installed and they basically keep their eyes and ears open. The school is robust about anti-bullying; Mr. Saviano strongly suggested the school arrange for a presentation by Steve, the young man who was shot by another student at Bristol High School several years ago. Mr. Howlett said the school has a very good relationship with the Warren Police and Fire Departments.

The Mentoring Program, organized by Mosaico, services 26 needy students; studies show a decrease in behavior problems and an increase in academic performance among mentored students. Partnerships are maintained with the Herreshoff Marine Museum as well as Roger Williams University. The school debuted on February 12, 2007, the “Kickemuit Information Distribution System” (KIDS). On September 1st the KMS e-news, a newsletter to KMS staff, was introduced; besides the staff, 368 others have subscribed.

Mr. Howlett utilizes “Differentiated Discipline,” an individualized approach to discipline; the goal is not to have students out of school unless absolutely necessary. Administrative Intern, Mrs. Stacia Jackson, reported that digital portfolio has been introduced to Kickemuit to prepare for the Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements for Middle School; mirroring high school regulations, all students will be trained in computer classes by Mr. Hagan and Mr. Urban and she will train the teachers, who have overwhelmingly embraced the process. A great deal of interaction and sharing has occurred between the 5th and 6th grade teachers and the 8th and 9th grade teachers to help students make the transition from elementary to middle and middle to high school.

Interscholastic and intramural sports are very healthy at KMS—115 students are participating in Track and Field. There are also many fun and academic clubs and activities such as Lego Robotics, Science Olympiad, Young Mariners and Shipwrights, Mock Trial and Odyssey of the Mind. The Principal boasted a group of fantastic interns and teachers.

Mr. Estrella asked the Committee to contact the Secretary with subjects for future workshops.

Adult Education Grant

An executive summary of the Adult Education Grant Proposal had

been reviewed by the Committee. New this year, the School Committee Chair is asked to sign off on the proposal; Mr. Estrella asked the Committee to contact Dr. Mara, the Secretary or him with issues or concerns so they can authorize the Chair to sign off at the next meeting.

Legal Exposure

Attorney Henneous will address the Committee in Executive Session later in the meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ISSUES/UPDATES

Dr. Mara reported on the fundraiser held this past weekend at Hugh Cole School to benefit a sick student at the school. He said the cooperation of the staff, PTO and Principal was extremely impressive and well-organized; the response from the public was incredible and heartwarming. Mrs. McBride agreed that it was a great experience, saying the children were wonderful and she congratulated the Hugh Cole community and the entire Warren community.

CHAIRPERSON'S INITIATIVES

School Committee Goals

Another meeting is needed to finish the goals; since the

Budget/Facilities Subcommittee does not need to meet in March, the School Committee will meet on March 19th, at 6:30 PM in the Superintendent's Office to work on their goals and self-evaluation.

SUBCOMMITTEE ISSUES AND UPDATES

Budget/Facilities Subcommittee

Mr. O'Dell said further meetings are on hold as we are waiting for the "magic number" at the end of the month; he thanked the Committee for 100% attendance at the Joint Finance Meeting. Mr. O'Dell urged the public to attend the next Joint Finance Meeting on Thursday, March 29th at 7:00 PM in the Hugh Cole Cafeteria if they wish to support programs they do not want to see cut and staff they feel should be maintained, May and June will be too late. Mrs. Kinsella suggested this message be published in the local newspaper.

Personnel/Contract Negotiations Subcommittee

Mr. Silva had nothing to report. The teachers' contract runs out in 15 months; he is planning on beginning discussions with the Superintendent about what needs to be done then discuss particulars with his subcommittee. Mr. Silva is hoping for the same type of cooperation and success as the last negotiations. Mr. Estrella asked Committee members to contact Dr. Mara with any concerns.

Policy/Community Affairs Subcommittee

Regarding Policy KD Public Participation at School Committee

Meetings, some confusion still exists and the policy will be discussed again at the next Policy Meeting. Mrs. Kinsella asked that concerns be sent to her. The options of Public Comment, Public Forum and Open Forum were discussed. It was mentioned that the best opportunity for parent/public input is at subcommittee meetings, also at any School Committee meeting/workshop with Public Comment and/or Public Forum as agenda items. Mr. O'Dell wished to clarify that the meeting where parents did not have an opportunity to speak was not a Budget Subcommittee Meeting, but a special meeting of the School Committee, and Public Comment and Open Forum were not on that agenda. Mrs. Kinsella announced that the Subcommittee will be creating a policy for memorials and asked that anyone who has information on any memorials on schools grounds, please pass it on to her.

Hugh Cole Construction Subcommittee

Mr. Brule talked about the landscaping plans for Hugh Cole; three separate RFP's will be put out—fencing, landscaping, and drainage and cement work. The Committee agreed that white fencing, which is more visible than brown, would work best.

Colt Andrews Construction Subcommittee

Mrs. McBride reported there is a technical review scheduled at the Bristol Town Hall tomorrow at 10:00 AM; there is also a Subcommittee meeting on Thursday at 7:00 PM in the Superintendent's Office for a project update.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - 8:55 PM

In accordance with Open Meeting Laws 42-46-5(a)(1)-(9), 2(b), Mr. Brule motioned to go into Executive Session at 8:55 PM for discussion of a legal case. Mr. Saviano seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Estrella announced that no action will be taken when the regular session is resumed.

RESUMPTION OF MEETING – 9:30 PM

Discussed in Executive Session was a legal case.

ADJOURNMENT – 9:30 PM

There being no further business to discuss, Mrs. McBride, seconded by Mr. Brule, motioned to adjourn at 9:30 PM. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Silva, Secretary

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